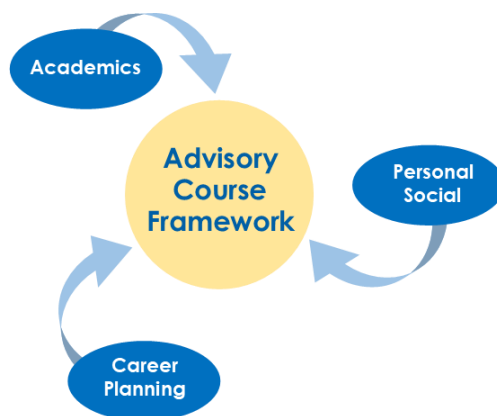# Kentucky Advisory Course Guidance

Advisory Course Framework

Focus on the Essentials
Academics
Career Planning
Personal/Social

According to Maslow's *Hierarchy of Human Needs,* a person needs to have a sense of safety and belonging in order to be successful and reach his full potential. If basic needs aren't being met, academics, work, planning for the future, and self-actualization are at the bottom of the priority list.

When students enter the school building they must be met with a positive learning environment that has been intentionally designed by the administrators, teachers, staff, and school community. An advising program can be the model program that helps to create this atmosphere. An advising program should unite students, staff, families, the community, businesses, and higher education to make the most of a student's educational experience.

In addition to academic guidance, students need opportunities to identify and explore personal and social goals for adulthood. As students transition from elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school, they will be faced with increasingly complex issues and decisions. How they approach these issues and what decisions they make can have lasting impact on their academic, social, emotional and physical development.

One optional component of an advising program is the offering of an advisory course for students. An advisory course is a method for ensuring students have access to a caring adult to address their academic, career planning and personal/social needs. The Kentucky Advisory Course Guidance is a resource for schools interested in offering an advisory course. .

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Building Your Advisory Course

Purposes of an Advisory Course

For an advisory course to be successful, goals and outcomes need to be established. The advisory course can help students discover more about themselves, gain self-confidence, engage in their education and set goals for the future. A strong advisory course should provide students the tools they need both academically and personally for success and encourage active participation in their school and community.

The following are samples of expected outcomes and goals for an effective student advisory course:
- Students feel accepted and valued as individuals, promoting greater self-esteem.
- Students develop better communication and inter-personal skills.
- Students demonstrate greater overall satisfaction with the school experience.
- Students attempt more rigorous coursework.
- Students feel prepared to successfully transition to each stage of life.

Model Design of an Effective Advisory Course

The most effective advisory courses are well designed and strive to best meet the needs of the students. In doing so, the most effective courses address three comprehensive domains:

- Academic Development
- Career Planning
- Personal/Social Development

The American School Counselor's Association (ASCA) has provided Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success for the three domains to help guide school counseling and advising programs.

Advisory Course Guidance

A quality course requires careful planning and time to develop and implement. The development of an advisory course can be implemented through three thought processes:

1. **Establishing your WHY**
   a. Defining the need

2. **Establishing your WHO**
   a. Establishing the relationships: administration, academic faculty, CTE faculty, industry partners, students, military contacts, parents, civic and community organizations, and employers

3. **Establishing your HOW**
   a. Delivery System
      i. Scheduling
      ii. Goals and Strategies
      iii. Resources/Tools
   b. Monitoring and Evaluation

Establishing Your WHY

Assessing the Needs

A review of school data is valuable in determining topics for the advisory course. Keep in mind that the advisory course should be organized around three domains: academic, personal/social, and career. Although there is abundant school data available on academic matters, there are also data on matters such as student discipline (behavior), attendance, retention and a category often referred to as opportunity gaps.

The chart below contains examples of various data to be used in determining topics for the advisory course. An examination of these data can also be helpful in determining goals for school improvement.

Test Scores	Attendance	Retention Rates
• Norm Referenced • Criterion Referenced	• Absences • Tardies • By Grade Level	• By Subject Area • By Grade Level • By Gender • Ethnicity

Enrollment	Discipline	Special Education
• Honors/AP Classes • College Path • Special Education	• By Classroom • Types of Problems • Gender	• By Gender • By Ethnicity • By SES

Graduation Rate	GPA/Class Rank	Dropout Rate
• By Gender • By Ethnicity • By SES	• By Gender • By Ethnicity • By SES	• Grade Levels • Gender, Ethnicity, etc. • Reasons Why

Making Connections to Data

Once data have been disaggregated and analyzed to determine topics and directions for the advisory course, it may be helpful to make connections to the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). A chart with examples is provided below.

Disaggregated Data	Relationship to CSIP	Planning Team Outcomes
Only 10% of African-American students are enrolled in Advanced Placement courses, while African American students comprise 35% of the school population	CSIP Goal: The school will provide an equitable learning environment where all students have access to high-level learning opportunities	Provide academic information to all students to strongly encourage enrollment in Advance Placement courses. Provide additional academic supports to any student wanting to enroll in Advanced Placement courses.

Establishing Your WHO

<u>The Planning Team</u>

It is highly suggested a school designate a team of people to design an advisory course. This team of people could include: classroom teachers, counselors, Family Resource/Youth Service Center staff, Community Education staff, administrators, family members and students. This collaboration creates ownership and investment in the course. It also ensures the course is not dependent on the leadership of one person or a small group.

Once established, course development should be methodical and implemented with fidelity, adhering to the best practices of the research. This does not mean that a course should not ever undergo revision, but that those revisions be purposeful and made with the best interest of the students in mind.

The planning team should represent the school, students, families and community. Since the advisory course is built around three separate domains (academic, career, and personal/social), it is important to involve membership from the community to focus on the areas of career development and personal/social growth. Initially, the planning team can have input into the design of the advisory course including topics to be discussed in each grade level. Once the advisory course is implemented, the planning team can meet periodically to discuss the impact and effectiveness of the course. If adjustments are needed to better meet the needs of students, the planning team can suggest changes to the program.

Questions to be considered should include the following:
- How will the members of the planning team be chosen?
- How long will members of the planning team serve?
- Will there be opportunities to add members to the planning team?
- Does the planning team represent all stakeholder groups?
- How often will the planning team meet?

Advisors

Staffing is an important issue that the team will need to take into consideration. Any caring adult in the school setting, as well as screened (background check) and trained community volunteers can easily and effectively serve as mentors and advisors. A school policy will be necessary in order to utilize classified and volunteer staffing.

It will be necessary to talk to stakeholders about the purpose of the advisory course. The planning team will examine all aspects of the course in pre-planning stages and share their plan for the program with stakeholders for input. People generally take a greater role in programs they have been able to provide input to, especially if they feel that their ideas and concerns were addressed.

The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) employs regional outreach counselors in 13 regions across the state. Outreach counselors are available, at no charge, to provide interactive workshops on a variety of college-planning, student financial aid, college admissions and financial literacy. Visit the *Counselors, Community Partners and College Access Providers* section of www.kheaa.com for contact information and presentation descriptions.

Advisory Course Staff Components	Decisions/Issues to be Discussed
What is your advisor to student ratio?	
Who will be advisors? How will they be chosen?	
Which students will be placed with advisors? Should students be allowed to choose? Do advisors keep students for one year, or as long as they are in the school?	
Will advisors be evaluated? What happens if advisors are not effective? Will students have a "voice" in determining how effective their advisors are?	
Will classified staff be advisors or just certified?	
How will advisors be trained?	
What resources will advisors need?	

Community, Industry and Postsecondary Education Partners

Developing partnerships with community members, industry leaders and postsecondary institutions are critical to the advancement of students from secondary school to postsecondary options with a career focus. These partnerships create opportunities for students that can be shared and facilitated through an advisory course.

Opportunities for community members, industry leaders and postsecondary education partners to serve:
1. Partners may serve as mentors.
2. Partners may serve as guest speakers.
3. Partners may offer apprenticeships, internships, externships, and/or shadowing opportunities, which can be discussed through advisory courses.

Establishing Your HOW

Goals and Strategies

An advisory course can include both structured activities (a college speaker, completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, teaching an anti-bullying lesson) and independent activities. An advisory course utilizing the national standards can formulate needed scaffolding for elementary, middle, and high schools in relation to awareness, exploration, and preparation for college and careers.

Curriculum decisions are made by specific level and examples of lessons are available in the second section of this guidance document.

A sample sequence for advisory in the 9th grade has been included below:

Month	Topics
August	• Team Building • Goal Setting • Suicide Awareness
September	• Self-efficiency • Attitude • Work Ethic • Study skills
October	• Thinking critically • Conflict Resolution
November	• Civic Engagement • Community Responsibility
December	• Promoting Teamwork • Serving Others

Month	Topics
January	• Academic Goal Setting
February	• Compassion • Social Awareness • Relationship Skills
March	• Effective Communication • Career Interests
April	• Responsible decision making • Aptitude and Skills
May	• Goal reflection • Career planning

Scheduling an Advisory Course

Many schools incorporate time for advisory into the daily or weekly schedule. Consider these sample schedules below.

Sample Schedule- School A		
High School	**Period**	**Middle School**
8:15- 9:14	**1ˢᵗ**	8:15 to 9:14
9:18 to 10:13	**2ⁿᵈ**	9:18 to 10:13
10:17 to 11:12	**3ʳᵈ**	10:17 to 11:12
11:16 to 11:41 (HS Lunch A) 11:45 to 12:44 (HS Class A) 12:19 to 12:44 (HS Lunch B) 11:16 to 12:15 (HS Class B)	**4ᵗʰ**	11:16 to 11:50 (Class) 11:50 to 12:15 (MS Lunch) 12:15 to 12:44 (Class Resumes) 12:15 to 12:44
12:48-1:18	**5ᵗʰ**	12:48 to 1:30
1:22 to 2:18	**6ᵗʰ**	1:34 to 2:18
2:22 to 3:20	**7ᵗʰ**	2:22 to 3:20

Sample 1: *High School A is a 7ᵗʰ to 12ᵗʰ grade school, thus including middle and high school. Advisory occurs during 5ᵗʰ period on Fridays.*

Sample Schedule- School B	
7:50	**First Bell**
7:55- 8:20	**Team Time**
8:25-9:20	**1ˢᵗ**
9:25-10:15	**2ⁿᵈ**
10:20-11:10	**3ʳᵈ**
11:15-12:40	**4ᵗʰ and Lunch**
12:45-1:35	**5ᵗʰ**
1:40-2:30	**6ᵗʰ**
2:35-3:25	**7ᵗʰ**

Sample 2: *High School B is a traditional 9ᵗʰ to 12ᵗʰ grade school. They have built time into the morning of their schedule for Advisory as well as for any "homeroom" type of activities that might need to occur.*

Sample Schedule- School C	
8:30-9:28	1st
9:33-10:31	2nd
10:36-11:34	3rd
11:39-1:39	4th (Class- 60 min, Lunch 30 min, MAT 30 min)
1:44-2:42	5th
2:47-3:45	6th

Sample 3: *High School C is a traditional 9th to 12th grade school. They have built time into their lunch periods to do what they call MAT (Mentoring and Advisory Time) so that students have an hour for class and thirty minutes each for lunch and MAT activities.*

Sample Schedule- School D	
8:20-9:20	1st
9:25-10:25	2nd
10:30-11:30	3rd
11:35-1:05	4th (Class and Lunch)
1:10-2:10	5th
2:15-3:40	6th (Class and AT)

Sample 4: *High School D, also a traditional 9th to 12th grade school, has incorporated their advisory time into the last class of the day. They have added extra minutes to complete AT, or Advisory Time, with the students.*

Tips for implementing an advisory course that meets daily or weekly:

- Start advisory time with a smile and enthusiasm.
- Allow group time to discuss problems or concerns.
- Always have a purpose.
- Keep expectations realistic.
- Get to know students as individuals.
- Allow students to get to know each other.
- Talk individually with students whenever possible.
- Learn and use names of students as you talk with them.
- Follow a planned agenda or activities.
- Advisory group is never a "Study Hall."
- Keep an open mind toward the program and be flexible with your students.
- Insist that all students follow school rules and any rules which the group has made.
- Develop a feeling of togetherness and group cohesiveness.

Monitoring and Evaluation

New programs, including courses, require monitoring and evaluation. To make your decision to offer an advisory course, you made the decision based on local data. The same approach should be considered as you monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your advisory course. Monitoring and evaluation can be conducted via a collection of perception, process and outcome data.

Process Data: What did you do and for whom?

Perception Data: What do people think they know, believe, or can do?

Outcome Data: What is the measured result of the action?

Monitoring and evaluation allow you to see if you are achieving your set goals through systemic processes that gather information. Monitoring and evaluation are requirements for courses to be continue to meet the needs of students. Monitoring and evaluation can be done through classroom observations, informal and formal questionnaires and surveys, focus groups and student attendance, behavior and achievement records.

Additional Resources

American School Counselor Association

Career and Technical Education

College Board Road Map to Careers

Education World Counseling Center

Federal Student Aid

Focus Talent and Focus Career

Junior Achievement USA

Kentucky Career Center

Kentucky Chamber of Commerce: Excellence in Education

Kentucky Academic Studies: Vocational Studies

KHEAA

National Association for College Admission Counseling

New Skills for Youth Kentucky –Regional Career Academies

O*NET Interest Profiler

O*NET Online

Operation Preparation